



Missing Child Policy, Absconding Protocol & Missing from Education Procedure

including Online Safety, Prevent Duty and Child Protection Procedures

Policy Owner: Bridge 2 Education & Employment

Linked Policies: Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Health & Safety Policy

Effective Date: June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

Policy statement

Bridge 2 Education & Employment (B2EE) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. The safety and wellbeing of every child remains paramount at all times.

B2EE recognises that children who go missing from education, abscond from supervision, leave an activity without permission or fail to arrive at an agreed destination may be at increased risk of:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines involvement
- Radicalisation
- Serious youth violence
- Substance misuse
- Missing from Home episodes
- Mental health crises
- Self-harm
- Suicide risk

- Trafficking
- Grooming
- Online exploitation

This policy sets out the procedures staff must follow when a pupil goes missing, absconds from supervision or cannot be located during B2EE activities.

This policy should be read alongside the B2EE Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and reflects the requirements of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Local Safeguarding Partnership Procedures

Definition of a Missing Child

For the purposes of this policy, a pupil may be considered missing if they:

- Leave the provision without permission.
- Leave a work placement without permission.
- Leave an educational visit without permission.
- Leave staff supervision.
- Fail to return from a break at the agreed time.
- Cannot be located during a session.
- Fail to arrive at a planned destination.
- Are believed to be at risk due to their whereabouts being unknown.

B2EE recognises that some pupils may be vulnerable to absconding due to SEND, SEMH needs, trauma, exploitation risks or previous missing episodes.

Preventative Measures

B2EE seeks to minimise missing incidents through:

Admissions Process

Prior to admission:

- Previous missing episodes are reviewed.
- Risk assessments are completed.
- Behaviour histories are reviewed.
- Safeguarding records are requested.
- Vulnerability factors are identified.

Individual Risk Assessments

Where required:

- Missing from Education Risk Assessment
- Educational Visits Risk Assessment
- Community Learning Risk Assessment
- Work Placement Risk Assessment

will be completed and regularly reviewed.

Daily Safeguarding Arrangements

- Registers completed at the start of every session.
- Regular headcounts during community activities.
- Appropriate staffing ratios maintained.
- Clear boundaries established.
- Positive relationships developed with pupils.
- Mobile phones collected at the beginning of sessions.
- Pupils supervised throughout activities.

Missing Child / Absconding Procedure

Immediate Actions (First 5 Minutes)

If a pupil is discovered missing:

Staff Member Responsibilities

1. Remain calm.
2. Inform the most senior member of staff immediately.
3. Confirm the pupil is genuinely missing.
4. Check:
 - Toilets
 - Breakout spaces
 - Outdoor areas
 - Vehicles
 - Nearby learning areas
5. Obtain:
 - Last known location
 - Direction of travel
 - Clothing description
 - Emotional presentation
 - Known triggers
6. Inform the DSL immediately.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

The DSL or Senior Staff Member will immediately undertake a dynamic risk assessment considering:

Vulnerability Factors

- Age

- SEND
- SEMH needs
- Mental health concerns
- Self-harm history
- Suicide risk
- Exploitation concerns
- Previous missing episodes
- Criminal associations
- Known risks

Environmental Factors

- Weather
- Time of day
- Traffic risks
- Local hazards
- Community risks

Search Procedure

Where appropriate:

Staff will search:

- Building
- Grounds
- Immediate vicinity
- Agreed safe locations

Searches should:

- Be proportionate.
- Not place staff at risk.
- Maintain supervision of remaining pupils.

Staff must not physically restrain a pupil attempting to leave unless there is an immediate risk of serious harm and intervention is lawful and proportionate.

Escalation Process

High-Risk Pupils

Police should be contacted immediately if:

- Child is under immediate danger.
- Child has suicidal ideation.
- Child has threatened self-harm.
- Child is known to be exploited.
- Child has learning difficulties making them vulnerable.
- Child has medical needs.

- Child is under 13 years old.
- Child is believed to be with risky adults.
- Child's whereabouts are completely unknown.

Contact Police

999 – Immediate Risk & to report missing pupil as all are considered vulnerable so it will always be an emergency.

Parent / Carer Notification

Parents/carers will normally be informed:

- As soon as practical.
- Within 15 minutes of a confirmed missing episode.

Unless doing so would:

- Increase risk to the child.
- Compromise a safeguarding investigation.

The DSL will determine this.

Local Authority Notification

The placing Local Authority will be informed where:

- Missing episodes exceed 30 minutes.
- The pupil is deemed vulnerable.
- Exploitation concerns exist.
- The child is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- The child is Looked After.

CPOMS Recording

Every missing episode must be recorded on CPOMS.

Records must include:

- Time missing identified.
- Last known location.
- Staff actions.
- Search conducted.
- Agencies contacted.
- Outcome.
- Return interview findings.
- Follow-up actions.

A chronology must be maintained.

Educational Visits & Community Activities

For off-site activities:

Immediate Actions

1. Secure remaining pupils.
2. Inform visit leader.
3. Conduct immediate search.
4. Contact DSL.
5. Escalate as appropriate.

Additional consideration must be given to:

- Transport hubs.
- Public spaces.
- Water hazards.
- Busy roads.
- Unknown adults.

Work Placements

Where a pupil absconds from a work placement:

The placement provider must:

- Contact B2EE immediately.
- Provide last known location.
- Provide CCTV or witness information where available.

The Missing Child Procedure will then commence. B2EE will always be at the venue where pupils are on placements to support safeguarding, and behaviour so would be in a position to manage the situation immediately.

If the Child Returns

When located:

Staff should:

- Remain calm.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Check immediate welfare.
- Assess medical needs.
- Assess emotional presentation.

The priority is safeguarding rather than punishment.

Return Interview

The DSL will conduct a return interview.

This will explore:

- Why the pupil left.
- Where they went.
- Who they were with.
- Whether they felt unsafe.
- Whether exploitation concerns exist.
- What support is required.

Post-Incident Review

Following every missing incident:

The DSL will review:

- Triggers.
- Staff response.
- Risk assessments.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Additional controls required.

Actions may include:

- Updated risk assessment.
- Increased supervision.
- Revised timetable.
- Family meetings.
- External referrals.

Child Criminal Exploitation Considerations

Staff must be alert to:

- Frequent missing episodes.
- Unexplained money.
- New phones.
- New clothing.
- Gang associations.
- Drug involvement.

Repeated missing incidents should always trigger consideration of CCE.

Child Sexual Exploitation Considerations

Staff must consider:

- Grooming.
- Hotel usage.
- Unknown adults.
- Gifts.
- Sexualised behaviour.
- Online relationships.

Repeated missing episodes should trigger consideration of CSE.

Staff Training

All staff receive training on:

- Missing children procedures.
- Dynamic risk assessment.
- Contextual safeguarding.
- Child Criminal Exploitation.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- County Lines.
- CPOMS recording.

This training is refreshed annually.

Monitoring & Governance

The DSL will:

- Track missing episodes.
- Analyse patterns.
- Report trends to senior leaders.
- Review risk assessments.
- Monitor effectiveness of interventions.

Missing episodes will form part of safeguarding audits.

Children Missing Education (CME)

B2EE recognises that children missing education are a significant safeguarding concern and may be at increased risk of:

- Abuse and neglect
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines involvement
- Radicalisation
- Serious youth violence
- Trafficking
- Forced marriage
- Honour-based abuse
- Mental health concerns
- Substance misuse

Attendance and engagement are therefore treated as safeguarding responsibilities and form part of B2EE's wider safeguarding arrangements.

Legal Definition of a Child Missing Education

In accordance with the Education Act 1996 and Department for Education guidance, a Child Missing Education (CME) is:

"A child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school."

Suitable education means efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

B2EE recognises that children who are persistently absent, disengaged from learning, or whose whereabouts become unknown may be at risk of becoming Children Missing Education.

Attendance Monitoring

Attendance is monitored daily by B2EE staff.

Registers are completed at the start of each session and attendance concerns are reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and senior staff.

Any patterns of absence, lateness or disengagement will be considered as potential safeguarding concerns and may trigger:

- Welfare calls
- Parent/carer meetings
- Attendance support plans
- Risk assessments
- Safeguarding reviews
- Referral to external agencies

First Day Calling Procedure

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, B2EE will undertake First Day Calling procedures.

Before the Session Begins

Attendance registers will be checked promptly.

If a Pupil is Absent

Staff will:

1. Attempt to contact the parent/carer using all known telephone numbers.
2. Send a text message where appropriate.
3. Contact emergency contacts if parents/carers cannot be reached.
4. Establish:
 - The reason for absence.
 - The pupil's whereabouts.
 - Whether any safeguarding concerns exist.

Recording

All contact attempts and outcomes will be recorded on:

- Attendance systems
- CPOMS (where safeguarding concerns are identified)

Escalation of Attendance Concerns

Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, staff will:

Day 1

- Implement First Day Calling.
- Notify the DSL.
- Record actions taken.

Day 2–5

- Continue contact attempts.
- Review safeguarding history.
- Consider welfare concerns.
- Undertake additional checks where appropriate.

Ongoing Concerns

The DSL will assess whether:

- The pupil may be missing from education.
- Safeguarding concerns are present.
- Children's Social Care involvement is required.
- The placing Local Authority should be informed.

Welfare Visits

Where concerns remain regarding a pupil's safety or whereabouts, B2EE may undertake a welfare visit where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Welfare visits will:

- Be risk assessed.
- Normally involve two staff members.
- Be recorded on CPOMS.

Where staff are unable to verify a child's safety, further safeguarding action will be considered.

Reporting Children Missing Education

B2EE will work closely with placing schools, local authorities and families to prevent pupils becoming Children Missing Education.

Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown and/or they have not been accessing education, B2EE will liaise with the relevant Local Authority.

In accordance with most Local Authority guidance, where a child has been out of education for ten school days or more and their whereabouts or educational provision cannot be confirmed, the child may need to be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team.

The DSL will determine whether a referral is required and ensure that all reasonable enquiries have been undertaken prior to referral.

Links to Safeguarding

Repeated absence, poor attendance or a pupil whose whereabouts are unknown may indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will always consider:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines
- Radicalisation
- Domestic Abuse
- Mental Health
- Neglect
- Online Exploitation

Attendance concerns will therefore be reviewed through a safeguarding lens rather than solely as an educational matter.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Attendance and Children Missing Education cases will be reviewed:

- Weekly by the DSL.
- Half-termly through safeguarding audits.
- Annually as part of safeguarding quality assurance processes.

Attendance patterns and CME referrals will form part of safeguarding reporting to senior leaders and commissioners.

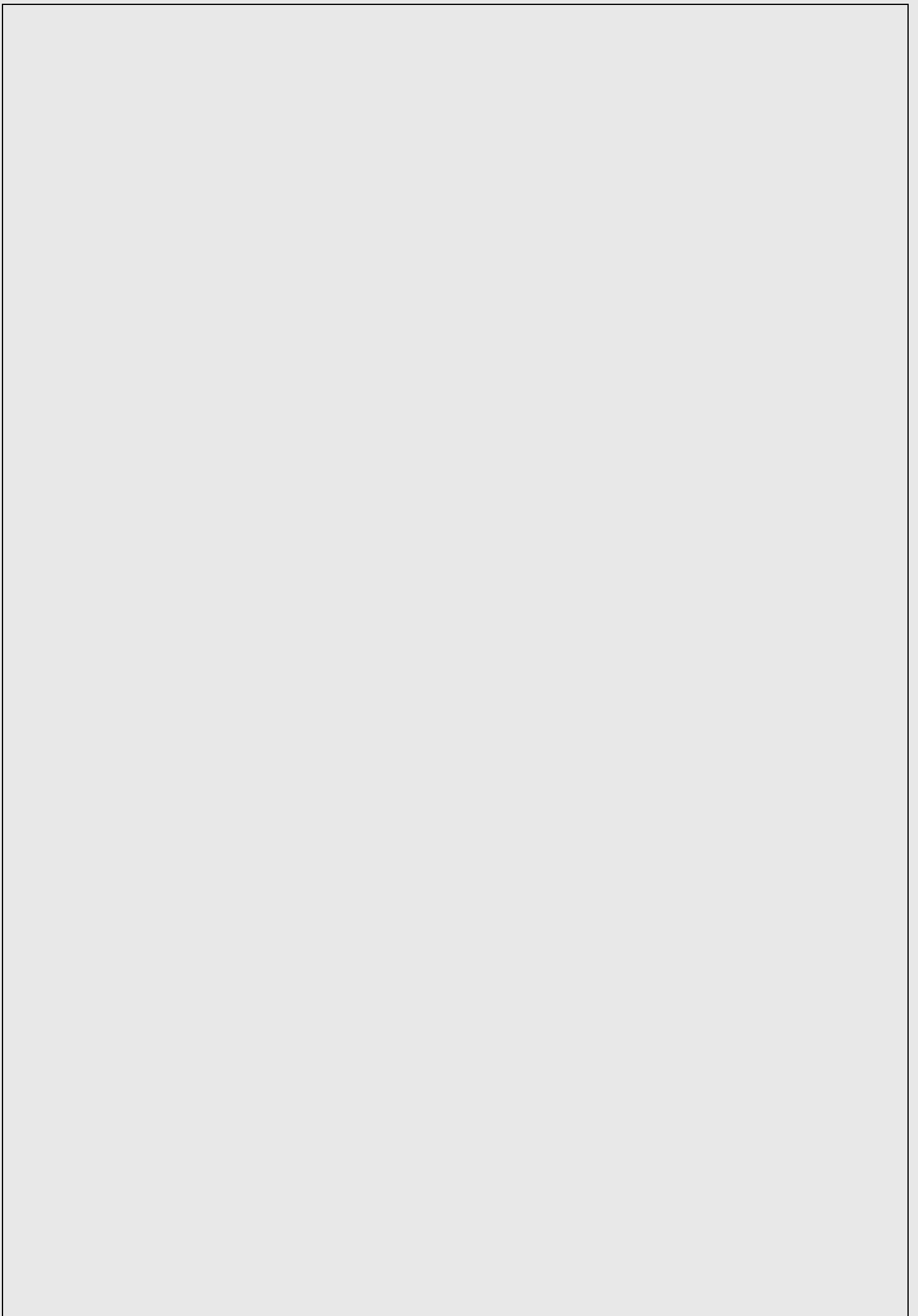
Policy Approval

Policy Owner: Bridge 2 Education and Employment

Approved by: Director of Operations

Date Approved: June 2026

Next Review Date: June 2027

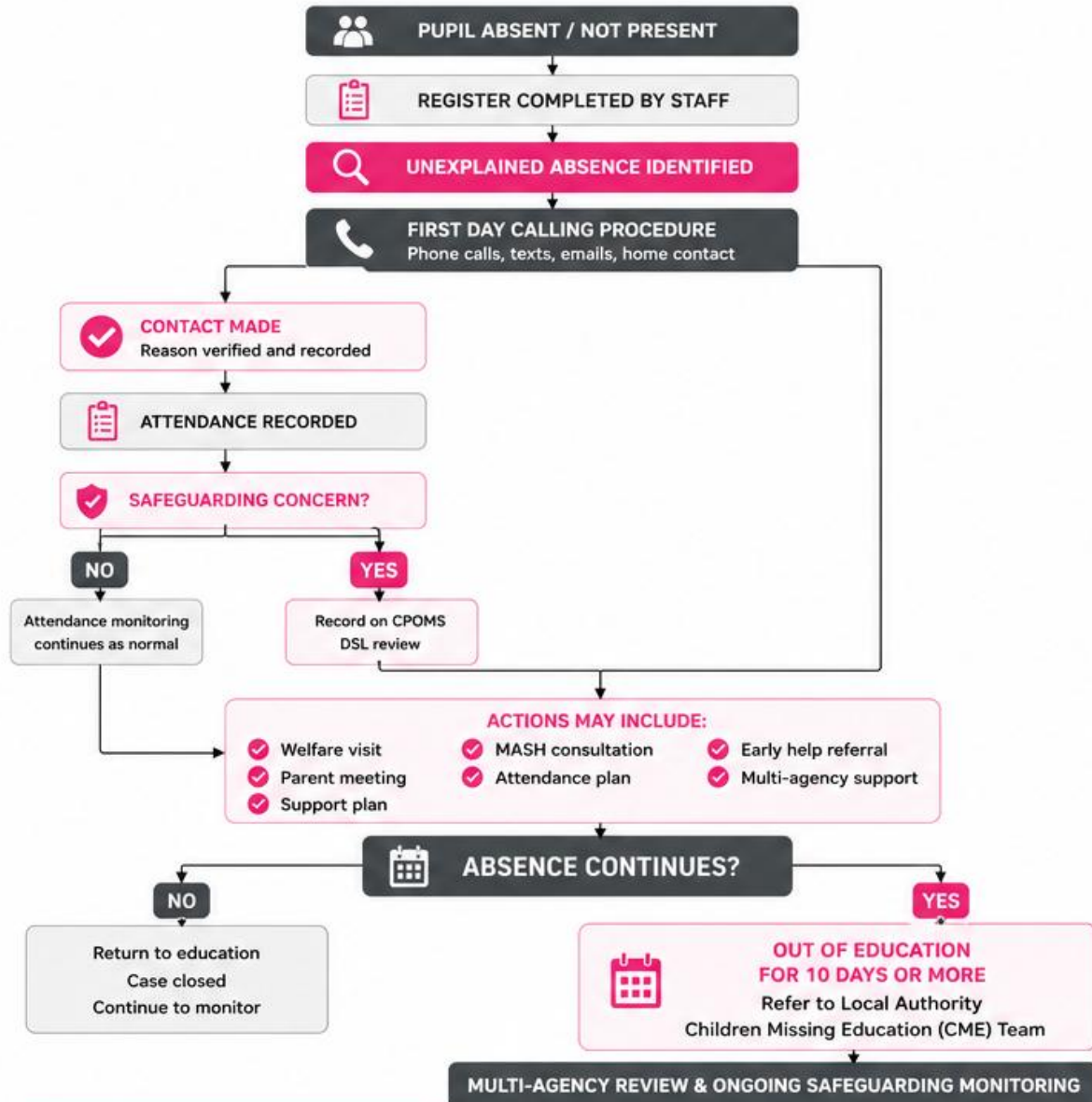


APPENDIX 1 – Children missing from education process flowchart

BRIDGE2
Education & Employment

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME) PROCESS FLOWCHART

Every Day Matters. Every Future Counts.



LEGAL DEFINITION OF A CHILD MISSING EDUCATION

A child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. (Education Act 1996)

B2EE is committed to ensuring all pupils receive a safe, suitable education. Attendance concerns are treated as safeguarding concerns and may indicate wider risks.

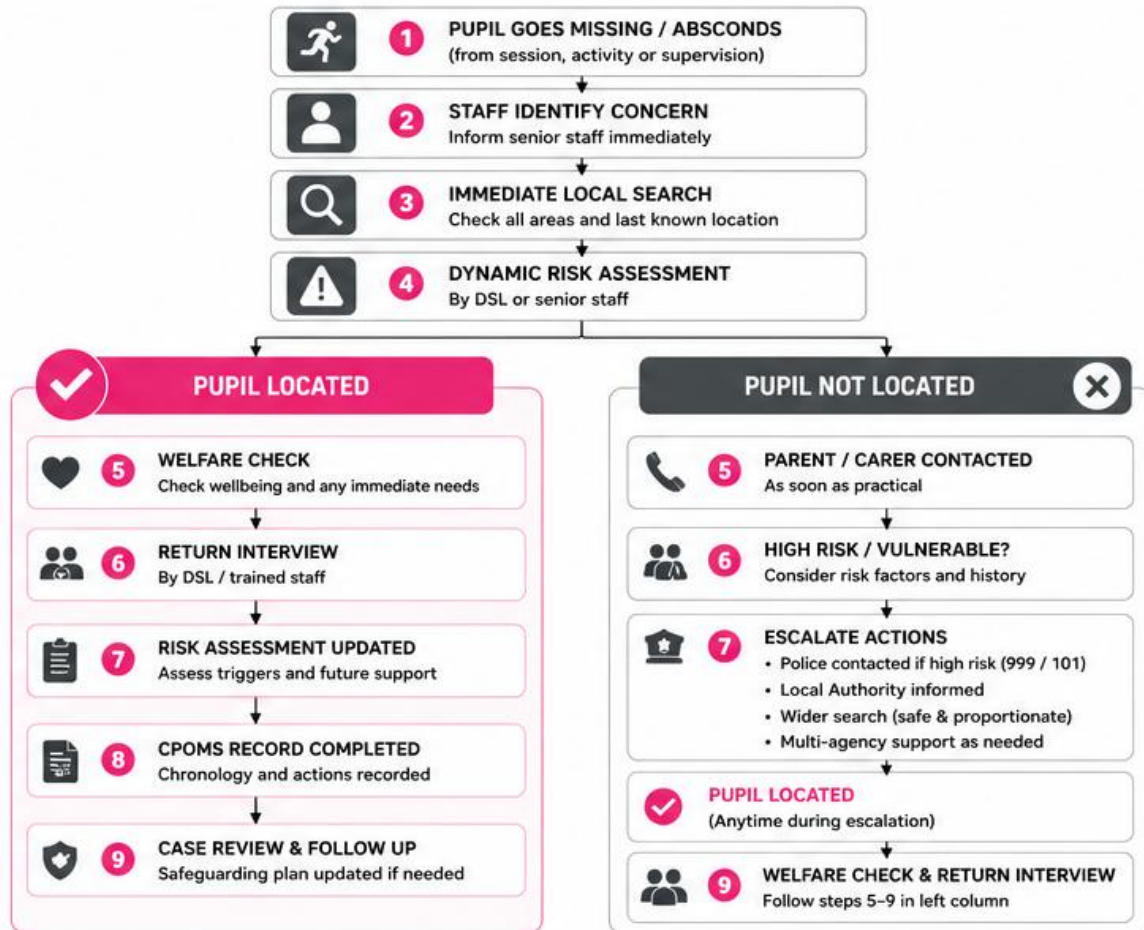


SAFEGUARDING • RESPECT • INCLUSION • ASPIRATION • EMPOWERMENT

APPENDIX 2 – Missing child/absconding protocol during B2EE sessions

MISSING CHILD / ABSCONDING PROTOCOL DURING B2EE SESSIONS

Act Quickly. Stay Calm. Keep Children Safe.



KEY PRINCIPLES

- ✓ Remain calm and act quickly
- ✓ Always prioritise the child's safety
- ✓ Record all actions on CPOMS
- ✓ Keep other children safe and supervised
- ✓ Follow safeguarding and risk assessment processes

WHEN TO CONTACT POLICE

- Immediate risk of harm
- Child under 13
- Child with vulnerabilities / SEND
- Known exploitation / CCE concerns
- Child has medical needs
- Whereabouts completely unknown

EMERGENCY CONTACTS
Emergency Services: 999
Police (Non-Emergency): 101
DSL - Lucy Abraham
lucy@bridge2ee.co.uk

ALL SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS
MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY
ON CPOMS

B2EE SAFEGUARDING TEAM
We are here to
keep our pupils safe.

